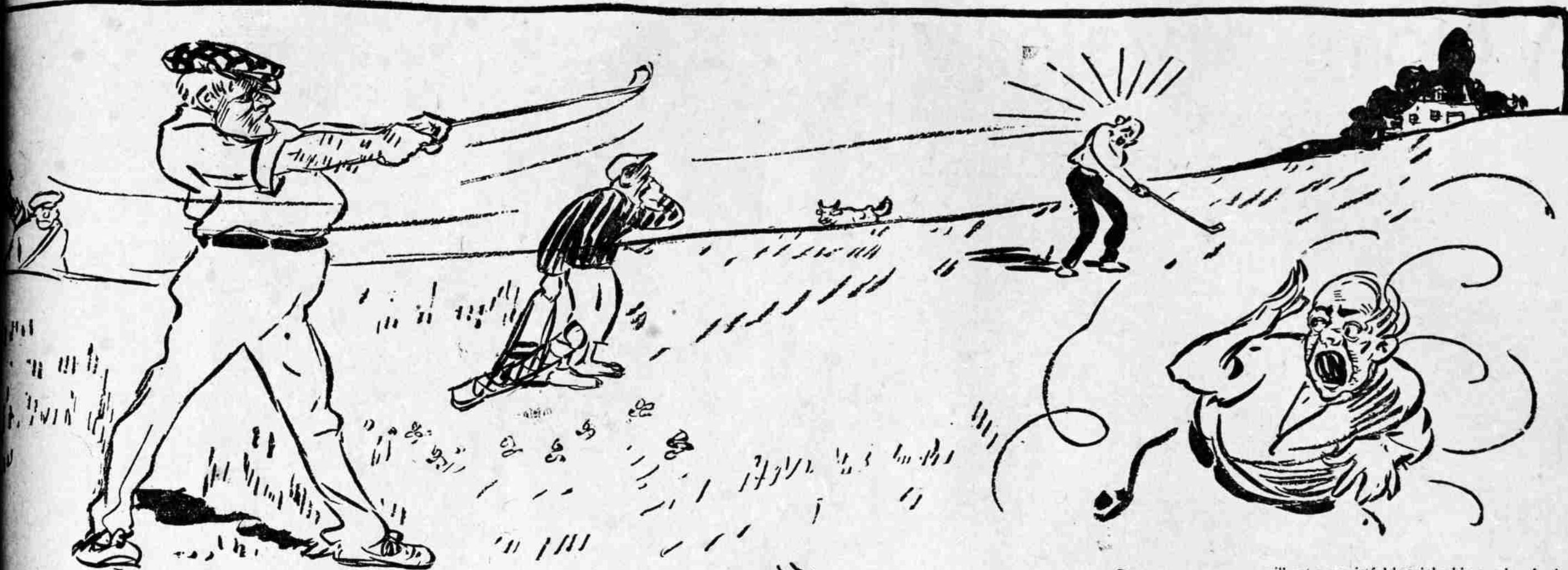


MR. DOOLEY ON OLD AGE

By FINLEY PETER DUNNE



NOT NOW ADAYS YELL SEE DASHIN' YOUNG LA-ADS IV
FIFTY-FIVE FULL IV BOOLGARIAN BUTHER MILK WALLOPIN
GOIN' BALL AROUND TH' LOT

"I'm gettin' old," said Mr. Hennessy. "I had me sixtieth birthday yisterdah."

"I wudden't have said ye were within ten years iv sixty," said Mr. Dooley. "I Hogan last year that ye were seventy-wan. I might've known better. Whin a man is be over seventy he boasts iv his age. He passes eighty he's very lible to lie about whin he's ninety he will throw his wig face iv anny man who insynates that he's oldest man in th' wuruld."

iv th' most savage combats I've iver this place was between old man Casey an' his father. They're both about eighty. There's a month or two's difference between them, but in champeenhip records iv this month counts like inches in th' broad. A man iv eighty-six looks down on a eighty-five, receives his callow opinyons iv a supercilious smile, an' if he talks too much he'll shut up."

to hear these two athletes discuss their ye'd think they were Matt McGraw an' Flannagan talkin' about th' hammer throw. started in be concedin' that Methusalem in their class at all. Their gin'ral idee that he had died iv cholery infantum. But come to comparin' ages nayether wan iv wad admit that th' other come within five bein' as fine a man as himself. They th'ir age be th' historical ivints they'd I never knew before that night that Hogan was at th' battle iv Watherloo or Father Casey had been wan iv Robert Im-pallbearers. Mither Casey was mut-somethin' about bein' an aidy camp fr James at th' battle iv th' Boyne whin his man who's in th' fire department come to him home. Whin he had gone ol' man says to me: "Young man, that fellow poster. Don't ye iver thrust him. He's to be ninety, an' I'd bet he's not a day twenty-nine if he's that." "How old ar-re Hogan?" says I. "I'm ninety-seven."

"I was bor-rn on th' eighth day iv eighteen hundred an' thirty," he says. pleasant to think that on'y very young very old men priting to be older than ere. Th' attempt iv a young fellow to th' hair into growin' on his upper lip Mither Hogan pretindin' he is ninety-seven th' same idee. They know ye can't amount anything unless ye ar-re old. Iv coorse ye'er Mither Hogan have a diff'rent theory age is old age. Ye'er boy thinks that a man gets to be forty th' neighbors to take him out in th' alley, put a bag on his head, an' hit him with a hammer. Old Hogan ain't sure that a man ought to vote he is at laste eighty. It's about that life that th' bones ar-re hardened, th' noses up an' stops growin', an' a citizen is entrusted with th' parties in life."

is strange how we look down on them that anger thin us. It's th' same with a man as it is with a schoolboy iv sixteen. iv them thinks th' fellows under him to anything. It shocks me to read that any val'able lives shud iv been entrusted th' war to Gin'ral Grant, who was on'y

forty. Whin th' Republican con-vintion was here I was parlyzed to see th' son iv an' old frind iv mine come out on th' platform to make a speech. I thought th' con-vintion had took a recess an' they'd brought him in to intertain them with a raycitation, or maybe he was a boy soprano. Says I to meself: "Poor little fellow, it's too bad to make him do such thricks. Infant prodigies niver come to anny good end. His mother ought to be ashamed iv herself." But whin he spoke I discovered that th' little rogue had a voice like a thrombone an' instead iv singin' 'Silver Threads Amongst th' Gould' he was debatin' a pin't iv ordher again' a vitrin iv th' civil war who lookt afraid iv him."

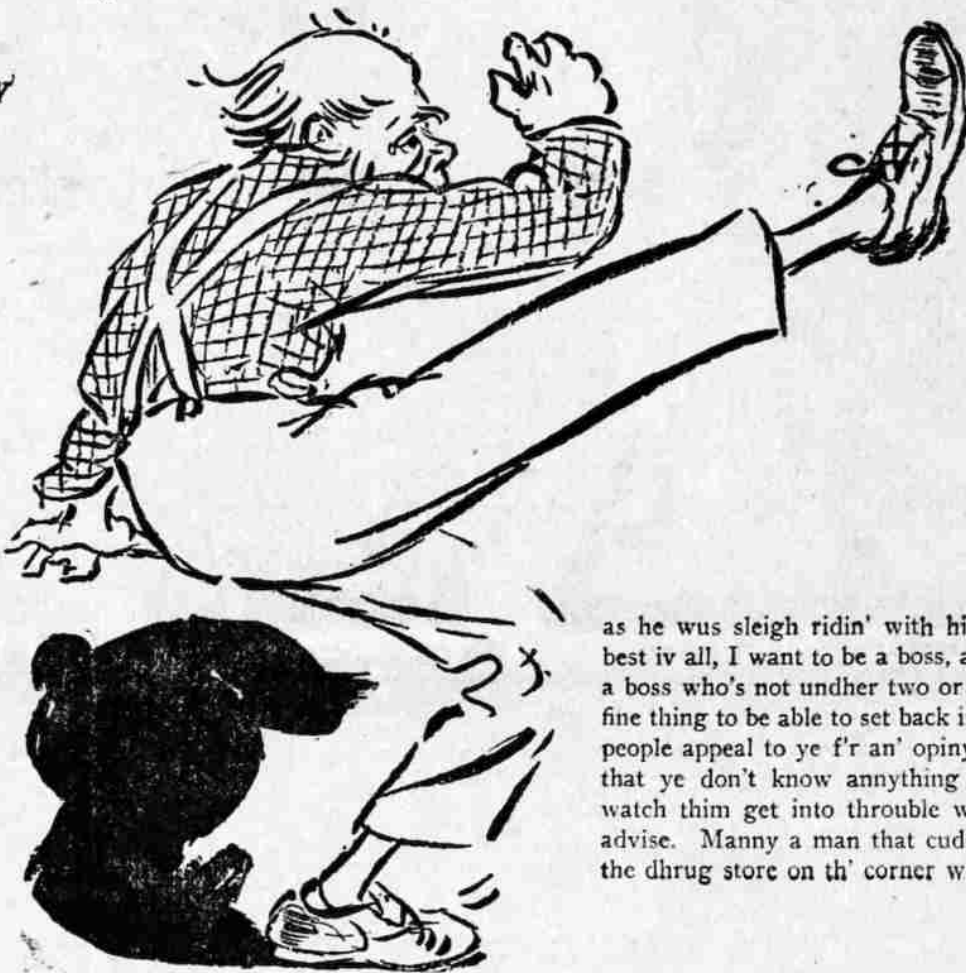
"I afterwards larned that th' spiled darlin' was th' father iv a family, th' hed iv a dillygation, th' author iv siv'ral iv th' most conservative planks in th' platform, an' called Elihoo Root 'Elihoo,' th' same as I do, who ar-re his akel."

"Middle age is th' on'y age. If I live to be a million I'll be as old as I was whin I was fifty. I remember well th' day whin Father Time laid his hands on me. He'd bin foolin' with me hair fr some time, whitenin' th' edges iv it an' pullin' out a spear or two iv vigytation now an' thin. But I give him no heed till he got tired iv warnin' me through me head an' made an attackt on me legs. I mind well th' day whin I got me notice that I was no longer immortal."

"I've told ye that in me time I was a gran' futball player. I suppose I cud kick a futball as fur as anny gun in th' wuruld cud fire a shell. 'Twas fr'm watchin' me kick that th' navy got their idee iv long distance shootin'. Wan day I was out on th' peerara an' I see a lot iv fellows playin' at futball. Says I to them: 'Stand aside, boys, an' lave an' ol' champeen show ye how to do it. I'll kick it to'rds th' west so it won't fall into th' lake. Some iv ye had better get on a car now an' go afther it.'"

"Thin, whin all was r-ready, I threw off me coat, took a short run, an' give a mighty kick. I didn't miss th' ball be much, th' spectators said, not more than a yard or two, but I missed it, an' a man fr'm Barnum's circus come around th' nex' day an' offered me a large sum iv money if I cud repeat in public th' back summersault that I done. He said it was th' mos' darin' act he had iver witnessed. Dock O'Leary who attended me, said I landed on me accyput. 'I niver knew I had wan,' says I. 'Its extreme density has saved ye'r life,' says he. 'Am I mortally injured?' says I. 'Can ye pull me through?' says I. 'I can put ye on ye'r feet, that's all,' says he. 'Ye'll niver be th' same man ye were,' says he. 'Ye have a common an' incurable disease. I have it meself. Ye'er middle aged. It's lucky fur ye that 'twas on'y thrin'e to kick a futball that brought this pinnilization on ye,' he says. 'Ye might have fallen in love,' he says. 'I can fix up ye'r leg,' he says, 'but I couldn't do much with ye'r heart,' he says."

"It was a gr-eat shock to me, an' fr a year or two I cast a gloom over ivry assembly that I went into. I thought I see a greedy glint in th' eye iv Mulligan, th' undhertaker, whin I passed his place. Whin Gavin, th' marble cutter, came



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as he was sleigh ridin' with his first girl. An', best iv all, I want to be a boss, an' no man can be a boss who's not undher two or over fifty. It's a fine thing to be able to set back in a chair an' have people appeal to ye fr an' opinyon on something that ye don't know annything about an' thin watch them get into trouble with th' fellow ye advise. Manny a man that cudden't direct ye to the dhrug store on th' corner whin he was thirty

will get a respectful hearin' whin age has further impaired his mind."

"Besides it don't seem that there ar-re anny old men nowadays. It used to be that a man iv fifty was thought to be too seenile fr anny useful wurruk. But nowadays ye'll see dashin' young la-ads iv sixty-five full iv Boolgarian butther-milk wallopin' a golf ball around th' lot. They take better care iv thimselves thin they used to. In th' ol days whin their teeth wint they followed immedately afther. But in our time they live long enough afther thir nacheral set ar-re gone to think iv their foster teeth as their own. Nawthin' is pleasanter thin to see an' ol' la-ad iv sivinty who had just run off fifteen balls in th' break at pool sayin' to his young companyon: 'I can't smoke thim strong tin cent seegars. I cud wunst, but that day has gone by. I'll have wan iv me own perfectos. An old man has to be careful.'"

"Very few old men iver get hurted in accidents. They take no chances. It's th' same as with sailors at sea: Thim that know how to swim ar-re thim that get drowned."

"Why," said Mr. Hennessy, "ye'd give annythin' to be twenty-five agin."

"I wudden't," said Mr. Dooley. "Why shud I want to grow old agin?"

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IF HE TALKS TOO MUCH, TELLS HIM TO SHUT UP